



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Economic Development Commission

MEETING MINUTES

November 8, 2011 | 7:30 p.m.

Commissioners: Daphne Collins (Chair), Chris Steele (Vice Chair), Jack Leader (Secretary), Barry Abramson, David Abromowitz, Jane Ives, Peter Lew, Philip Plottel, Darryl Settles

Staff: Candace Havens, Amanda Stout

Absent: Chuck Eisenberg, Robert Gifford, Ron Lipof, Joyce Moss, John Pears

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Candace Havens
Director
Planning & Development

Amanda Stout
Senior Economic
Development Planner

Commissioners

Daphne Collins, Chair
Christopher Steele,
Vice Chair
Jack Leader, Secretary

Barry Abramson
David Abromowitz
Charles Eisenberg
Robert Gifford
Jane Ives
Peter Kai Jung Lew
Ronald Lipof
Joyce Moss
John R.A. Pears
Philip Plottel
Darryl Settles

1. EDC Business

- In the interest of time, Collins recommended moving the “Old Business: Riverside Letter” item before the “Report from the Subcommittee on Business Attraction” item.

2. Existing Business

- On October 20th, Collins, Steele, and Candace Havens met with Mayor Warren to discuss the role of the EDC and engagement on major economic development projects in the City. Collins reported that Mayor Warren plans to host monthly “Business Roundtable” meetings to which he will invite 5-6 business owners, representatives of the EDC, Chamber of Commerce, and Planning Department to listen to the business owners and discuss issues and concerns.

- On October 28th, Collins, Steele, Lipof, and Stout met to strategize the EDC’s meetings with business owners, as part of the outreach effort that may contribute to Mayor Warren’s “Business Roundtables.” This outreach also dovetails with the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) which inquires about the City’s process for engaging with existing business owners. In the next month, Collins, Steele, and Stout will begin this concerted effort to meet with local businesses and gather data on their experiences and needs.

- Business Incubator Initiative – Collins reported on Lipof’s idea to create a business incubator in Newton. The group discussed the opportunity and need for shared office space (Newton currently has at least two such spaces at Chapel Bridge Park and Newton Executive Office Center), but also discussed that an incubator might be broader: a space that provides business services and connects start-ups with business resources, advice, and venture capital in Newton. Lipof will investigate the possibility of engaging local MBA students to create a plan for a business incubator. Commissioners will further develop ideas and report back in December. A subcommittee meeting was scheduled for November 18th at 6pm to discuss further.

- The EDC is interested in creating an Awards Ceremony as a way to support and publicize our local businesses; the Commission will follow-up in the new year.

3. Old Business: Riverside Letter

- Plottel drafted a letter from the EDC regarding the Riverside Station development. Commissioners reviewed the letter, made some revisions, and approved a letter. The EDC requested Havens to present the Mayor and President Lennon a preview copy for their review and comments before distribution.

4. EDC Business

- Vote on October 11th Minutes. Motion to approve (9-0, Steele seconded by Abramson)

5. Subcommittee on Business Attraction

- Steele reported that the City's Zoning Reform Group held a public meeting and would soon be completing the final report. Commissioners have attended and commented at some meetings.
- The subcommittee has been talking with office brokers and commercial brokers to get a sense of how they market Newton to prospective businesses and how they work with the City. The subcommittee is also thinking about the City's permitting process, examining underutilized properties, and planning to coordinate with the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce.

6. Announcements and Updates

- Stout reminded the Commission of the Newton Cultural Alliance's "Culture 'n Cuisine" initiative, the MIT graduate students who will soon be completing their study of West Newton, and the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) that will be discussed at the December meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Stout, AICP, Sr. Economic Development Planner